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Testimony in support of:

HB 5287 AN ACT ALLOWING THE PRODUCTION AND SALE OF ACIDIFIED FOOD PRODUCTS ON RESIDENTIAL FARMS

Submitted by: Steven K. Reviczky, Executive Director, Connecticut Farm Bureau Association

The following testimony is submitted on behalf of the Connecticut Farm Bureau, a statewide nonprofit membership organization of over 5,000 families dedicated to farmers and the future of Connecticut agriculture.

Connecticut Farm Bureau supports HB 5287 An Act Allowing the Production of Acidified Food Products on Residential Farms

Senator Harris, Representative Ritter, and Members of the Public Health Committee:

The Connecticut Farm Bureau Association strongly supports HB 5287 An Act Allowing the Production and Sale of Acidified Food Products on Residential Farms. The passage of HB 5287 will allow farmers to produce a wider variety of value-added food products on the farm by allowing the production of acidified foods in much the same way that they can make jellies and jams today. This will not only be a boost for the local economy but a great help to many small farm families.

There has been an explosion in the interest and demand for locally grown foods. Connecticut citizens want access to healthy, safe, Connecticut Grown products. Passage of HB 5287 will go a long way in helping meet that demand.

While current state law allows jams and jellies to be made and sold on residential farms, it requires that most other food products be prepared in government inspected commercial kitchens. The requirements for such kitchens are extensive and expensive. The cost of constructing and equipping such a facility is a barrier that many small farm operations simply cannot overcome. HB 5287 includes many safeguards: A very restrictive definition of acidified foods and requiring a laboratory pH test of the completed recipe, an annual water test and safe food handling training that is approved by the Connecticut Department of Public Health.

Connecticut Farm Bureau respectfully asks that the committee follow the lead of other states in this regard and support HB 5287, An Act Allowing the Production and Sale of Acidified Foods in Farm Kitchens.